Notes from the Field by Liz Milazzo, Field Production Manager

The weather just turned . . . it’s confirmed, we’re heading into fall! Ground spider webs sparkle in the low light of dawn and dusk, stranded across the open soil. Rows of cosmos and bachelor button field flowers are fading from magenta and cornflower blue into brown-green, and arms of red amaranth are bending to the ground. The farm looks again as it did in May, with more tilled bare ground than crops standing. Cover crop seed is on order, and we’re strategizing the timing of drilling the seed. This year we’re bent on establishing the cover early, in the case of strong El Niño rains.

It’s hard to believe that only two weeks remain in the 6-month apprenticeship. The mood is reflective, happy, poignant, emotional – a little bit of everything. For an inspiring look at where alumni have landed and grown deep roots, check out the CASFS Grow A Farmer website, www.growafarmer.com. It’s a changing landscape, and gratifying as an instructor to know that more and more organic farm jobs are out there for graduates to apply to.

This year’s harvest feels particularly abundant having added to the mix dry beans, popcorn, and a polenta corn. We’ll have an offering next week of Vermont Cranberry, Calypso, and Black Turtle soup beans. We harvested 340 pounds of dry beans from six rows in the Main field (3,400 pounds/acre), improving yields over last year by planting earlier and harvesting earlier. We windrowed the plants this year for field curing, getting to the task in time to avoid a lot of seed shattering on the soil. On our first attempt, we pulled the tractor undercutter bar through the rows, but abandoned that effort about 20’ into the field! Due to some particulars on the shape of the sled, the plants balled up into a big mess. Instead, we fanned out and pulled the plants by hand – a reasonable task for a big crew (took us about a half hour.)

Next step was to field thresh with a modified gas-powered leaf shredder/wood chipper turned grain thresher, the Roto Hoe. This involves feeding the dried bean plants into the “machine,” where the bean pods get cut from the stems and break open. Big thanks to Andy for imagining and manifesting improvements that have made this machine a quite effective small-scale thresher. The almost final step from field to table was to clean the seed in an M2B electric seed cleaner. The final, final step will be to put the beans through a second pass on the M2B to remove some last soil and weed seed.

Popcorn will also be coming to the boxes next week. We’re still trying to figure out the proper curing on the large ears – they may just need to cure on the cob for several months. Although beautiful, they are not popping yet.

Recipes by Crop PDFs are available online, indexed alphabetically, at:
http://casfs.ucsc.edu/community/produce-sales/recipes.html

Newsletter archives are also available online at:
http://casfs.ucsc.edu/community/produce-sales/csa-newsletters.html
### Turnips with Roasted Garlic Goat Cheese & Sesame

**Serves 4**

- 1 garlic head, halved crosswise
- 1-1/4 C plus 2 T olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 8 oz. goat cheese
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 T black and/or white sesame seeds
- 1 tsp. finely grated lime zest
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh oregano
- 1/4 tsp. *sumac

12 oz. small turnips (about 16), peeled, half quartered, thinly sliced rounds
1 T Sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
Cilantro leaves with tender stems and mint leaves (for serving)

Heat oven to 350°F. Combine garlic and 1-1/4 C oil in a small baking dish. Cover with foil and roast until garlic is golden brown and tender, 45–50 minutes; let cool.

Remove garlic from oil; squeeze cloves from skins and finely chop to a paste. Process in a food processor along with goat cheese, 1/4 cup garlic roasting oil, and 2 T water until smooth (mixture should be spreadable); season with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, toast sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat until golden brown, about 1 minute. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool. Mix in lime zest, oregano, thyme, and sumac.

Toss turnips in a medium bowl with vinegar and 2 T oil; season with salt and pepper. Divide goat cheese mixture among plates, top with turnips, sesame mixture, cilantro, and mint, and drizzle with more oil.

Do Ahead: Roasted garlic goat cheese can be made one day ahead; cover and chill. Bring to room temperature before using.

*Sumac, a tart, citrusy spice sold in ground form, available at Middle Eastern markets, specialty foods stores, and online.*

### Red Kuri Squash Soup

**Serves 4**

- 1-1/2 pounds red kuri or butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes (3 C)
- 1/2 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 medium fennel bulb, cored and cut into thin wedges
- 1 T extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 T unsalted butter
- Chopped toasted pecans and small marjoram leaves, for garnish

Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large saucepan, combine cubed squash with chopped onion, bay leaf and 3 C of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Cover and simmer over low heat until squash is tender, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, on a large rimmed baking sheet, toss fennel wedges with the 1 T of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss well. Roast for about 25 minutes, until the fennel is tender and starting to brown.

Discard bay leaf from the soup. Working in batches, puree soup in a blender. Return soup to the saucepan and warm over low heat. Stir in butter and season with salt and pepper. Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with the roasted fennel, pecans, marjoram leaves and a drizzle of olive oil.

Do ahead: Soup can be refrigerated overnight. Reheat gently.

www.foodandwine.com

### Easy Sautéed Spinach

**Serves 4**

- 2 large bunches of spinach, about 1 lb
- Olive oil, extra virgin
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- Salt to taste

Cut off thick stems of spinach and discard. Clean spinach by filling up sink/bowl with water and soaking spinach to loosen any sand or dirt. Drain then repeat soaking and draining. Remove any excess moisture.

Heat 2 T olive oil in a large skillet on medium high heat. Add garlic and sauté for about 1 minute, until garlic is just beginning to brown.

Add spinach to pan, packing it down a bit if necessary. Use a couple spatulas to lift spinach and turn over in pan to coat with the olive oil and garlic. Cover pan and cook for 1 minute. Uncover and turn the spinach over again. Cover and cook for an additional minute until spinach is wilted.

Remove from heat. Drain excess moisture from pan. Add more olive oil, sprinkle with salt to taste. Serve immediately.

www.simplyrecipes.com

---

*C = cup; T = tablespoon; tsp. = teaspoon*